

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:
Thomas Sheridan, Seine Area Management Biologist
Jeremy Botz, Gillnet Area Management Biologist
Amanda Wiese, Assistant Area Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 424-3212 Fax: (907) 424-3235

Prince William Sound Area Office
401 Railroad Avenue, PO Box 669
Cordova, AK 99574-0669

Date Issued: Friday, September 14, 2012
Time: 2:00 pm

Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #66

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, September 17 for a 24-hour period. The Bering River District is anticipated to be on a 1-2 period a week schedule dependent upon escapement and harvest trends. Preliminary harvest from the 24-hour period that closed this morning is not yet available. For the week ending September 15, the Bering River District aerial survey index was 14,955 coho salmon, which is above the midpoint anticipated inseason target of 12,330 coho salmon and below the upper anticipated inseason target of 17,691. During this survey, observational conditions for Bering River District index systems were fair. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, September 17 for a 24-hour period. The Copper River District is anticipated to be on a 1-2 period a week schedule dependent upon escapement and harvest trends. Preliminary harvest from the 24-hour period that closed this morning is not yet available. For the week ending September 15, the Copper River Delta aerial survey index was 31,445 coho salmon, which is above the midpoint anticipated inseason target of 28,571 coho salmon and below the upper anticipated inseason target of 38,285. During this survey, observational conditions for Copper River District index systems were fair. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown next week.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District within Eshamy Bay, west of a line from 60° 27.93' N., 147° 57.78' W. to 60° 28.84' N., 147° 58.56' W., will open to set and drift gillnet harvest for a 12-hour period from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm on Monday, September 17. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures are in effect in the Eshamy District. There was no harvest reported from the period that closed Thursday, September 13. **No commercial harvest has been reported in the Eshamy District since August 27; the Eshamy District will close to commercial salmon fishing after the completion of the Monday, September 17 fishing period.**

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH SHA inside a line of buoys in front the hatchery, will open to **drift gillnet fishing only** for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, September 17. There was no harvest reported from the period that closed Wednesday, September 12.

SEINE FISHERIES: Aerial surveys for Prince William Sound will continue on a limited basis for the remainder of the season, weather permitting.

PWSAC reached its eggtake goal of 148 million green eggs at WNH on September 3. PWSAC reached its eggtake goal of 162 million green eggs at AFK on September 7. Through September 6, PWSAC reports being 41% complete towards a final eggtake goal of 187 million green eggs at CCH.

There have been no purse seine harvests reported in Prince William Sound since September 8. **It is anticipated that the 2012 Prince William Sound purse seine fishery will close at 8:00 pm on Wednesday, September 19 for all purse seine fishing districts.** All purse seine fishing periods announced on Wednesday, September 12 remain in effect as previously worded until their closure at 8:00 pm on Wednesday, September 19.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, September 19. Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an "intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering." (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.